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SUBJECT: OSCE/PERMANENT COUNCIL: RESPONSE TO REPORT BY
KOSOVO HEAD OF MISSION, AMBASSADOR ALMHOFER

¶1. (U) Post is authorized to deliver the following statement
at the September 10 Permanent Council meeting in Vienna.

Begin text:

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

The United States joins other delegations in welcoming
Ambassador Almhofers back to the PC. We thank you for your
thorough report.

The United States notes with satisfaction that the situation
in Kosovo continues to evolve in a positive direction. Kosovo
has been invited to become a member of the World Bank and the
IMF. A number of key institutions such as the Kosovo Judicial
Council, the Office of the Ombudsman, and the Constitutional
Court, have now been established. Plans for energy and
infrastructure development show the Government's
determination to improve economic and social conditions,
despite lingering effects of the global financial crisis. The
security situation, with some isolated exceptions, is stable,
as reflected by the generally peaceful environment and KFOR
plans for gradual downsizing. Kosovo is on the right path.

In that regard, we welcome the progress the OSCE Mission in
Kosovo (OMIK) has made in adjusting its work to the evolving
needs of Kosovo's people and institutions. We are pleased
that OMIK's important work in core human rights monitoring is
now being complemented and amplified by effective assistance
and capacity building efforts at the local and central level.
We urge OMIK to continue to draw attention to shortcomings in
Kosovo's institutions at the same time as it works to build
capacity and help solve problems. The mission's recent work
in democratization is commendable.

Consolidating this progress requires continued international
engagement, capacity building, and active cooperation with
Kosovo institutions and community leaders. I would also like
to highlight that the issue surrounding housing
reconstruction in the north is a sensitive one. We encourage
the Government of Kosovo, community leaders, and all
stakeholders to continue efforts to find peaceful solutions
to this and other issues in a way that reinforces stability
and strengthens the rule of law.

As we have stated before, the engagement of all communities,
including Kosovo Serbs, in Kosovo's politics and with its
administrative institutions is critical for the development
of a prosperous, multi-ethnic, democratic state, in which
minority communities have a strong voice in their affairs.
Practical solutions to the challenges facing Kosovo's
citizens in building thriving communities, including issues
such as public services, property claims, and protection of
cultural and religious heritage, depend on this constructive
engagement. We welcome efforts by the mission to foster this
engagement.

In keeping with Kosovo's evolution, the United States
believes that further streamlining of OMIK should be possible

without having a major impact on programmatic results. The upcoming budget cycle will provide an opportunity for us to fine-tune OMIK's course to ensure that the mission's activities focus on areas where the OSCE has proven competency and is not redundant with the activities of other international actors in Kosovo. We look forward to the mission's expertise and vision to inform decisions on the strategic changes that will make the most of the OSCE's resources. It is crucial to work toward the right balance between headquarters and field staffing, and between monitoring and effective capacity-building.

The United States will continue to strongly support Kosovo's development as an independent state. In the context of the OSCE, we will keep working with other participating States to enhance OMIK's contribution to Kosovo's stability. Supporting a multi-ethnic democratic Kosovo, which protects the rights of all its communities and preserves religious freedom, which has strong and stable institutions that can deliver economically for its citizens, and which is increasingly integrated into European and regional institutions are goals that are consistent with OSCE principles and which we should all support.

Thank you, Madam Chairwoman.

End text.
CLINTON